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The Archetypal **Hero's** Journey: **Neo** in *The Matrix*

In *The Matrix* trilogy, a revolutionary science fiction movie trilogy by the Wachowski Brothers, humanity is fighting a war against machines. It is believed that the war is approximately a century old, but no one really knows for sure. In this futuristic world, approximately 2199, most humans are used as a power source for the machines, and are plugged into and live in The Matrix, a highly advanced simulation of society at the turn of the twentieth century. However there are around a quarter million humans, many of whom were once part of The Matrix, who live deep underground in a city known as Zion. These free humans wage a war against the machines for their very survival, both through combat in the real world and combat in The Matrix. The battle is a loosing one, the humans are greatly outnumbered and outgunned, however some believe in a prophecy, which says that "the one" will come to them, and that he will be capable of amazing things, and will end the war… that man is **Neo**. **Neo**, through his journey from being a part of The Matrix to ending the war, follows the path of the Archetypal **hero**.

The Matrix opens with **Neo** still a part of the machines' system, and unaware of what The Matrix is. He is then **called into his adventure** when a hacker on his computer tells him to follow the white rabbit, a woman with one of **Neo**'s associates shows up at his door, with a white rabbit on her soldier. When he follows he meets Trinity, a woman who will become a **helper** and lover to him, she tells him that they will be in touch. Then after a run in with agents; the **guardians** of the matrix, which are a computer program designed to kill free humans who are working within The Matrix; **Neo** meets Trinity again, and this time he meets Morpheus well, another of his **helpers** and captain of one of Zion's ships. Here **Neo** is told he must choose between leaving The Matrix and learning the truth or

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being safe and never knowing what The Matrix is. He chooses to leave The Matrix and as

his body is ejected from the machines power plant he **crosses the threshold** into a world

where his body is no longer used by the machines, and in which he can plug himself into

and unplug himself from The Matrix. **Neo** is now in **the shadow realm;** in the real world

he is hunted by sentinels, search and destroy droids, and in The Matrix he is hunted by the

agents.

  Neo then begins to encounter **test** after **test**. The first truly important one is a

meeting with The Oracle, a program which helps the humans and is capable of predicting

the future. She gives him some discouraging news… that he is not "the one". His next **test**

is the rescue of Morpheus who has been captured by agents. He succeeds at this, however

as he, Morpheus, and Trinity are leaving The Matrix **Neo** becomes trapped and is forced to

fight an agent. He then accomplishes the impossible; he kills the agent, something which

no one has ever achieved. He then runs to try to make it to another exit. When he reaches

the exit three more agents are waiting, and one of them unloads an entire clip into **Neo**,

killing him. **Neo** then miraculously comes back to life and begins to fight the agent with

newfound strength and speed; he then stops bullets from hitting him using his mind. This

time he doesn't just kill the agent, but actually destroys his program. The activities of this

fight prove to himself and the others aboard his ship, that he is in fact "the one".

  Now **Neo** begins to go about the task of fulfilling the prophecy, and ending the war.

He once again goes to visit the Oracle, and after she leaves an army of Smiths, the former

agent who **Neo** had destroyed, attacks **Neo**, and this time Smith has the ability to copy as

many of himself as he should choose. **Neo** is able to hold his own, but is outnumbered and

so he flies away like superman. After a few more fights **Neo** encounters another large **test**.

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He meets the architect, the program who designed The Matrix. The architect tells him that he has two choices: to save the human race, but abandon Zion, or to save Trinity and doom the human race to extinction. He chooses to save Trinity. Once **Neo** and Trinity make it out of The Matrix their ship, The Nebuchadnezzar, comes under attack, **Neo** is able to stop the attacking sentinels using his mind, however the action puts his body in a comma and his mind in "the train station" a link between the machine world and The Matrix. Once Morpheus and Trinity rescue **Neo** from "the train station", **Neo** decides that to end the war he must go to the machine city (in the real world), something which no one has ever succeeded in doing. Once he makes it to the machine city he makes a deal with the machines; by this point Smith, with his ability to copy himself, has taken over The Matrix and will soon try to take over the machine city. **Neo** says that in return for peace, he will stop him. **Neo** fights Smith in his **Supreme Test**, but is losing, **Neo** then realizes what he must do, he submits to Smith, letting Smith copy himself onto **Neo**. When he does this the machines in the real world pump energy through **Neo**, destroying Smith. **Neo** is dead, but Zion, which was near destruction, is saved, and those within The Matrix who wish to, are allowed to leave.

The path which **Neo** follows, from **crossing the threshold** into freedom from machine use, to the **shadow realm** he enters, the **helpers** and **guardians** of **the shadow realm** he encounters, the **tests** he faces, the **supreme test** he fights, and the **reward** of peace he receives. **Neo** follows the Archetypal **Hero's** Journey, showing that all stories are old, based on previous generations of literature.